

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

http://www.dfg.ca.gov



May 6, 2005

Dear Wildlife Rehabilitator,

The Department of Fish and Game (the Department) is notifying all wildlife rehabbers to take special care in the rehabilitation and release of orphaned and injured fawns. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a disease of concern that affects North American deer and elk and is spreading in some areas of the United States. At the current time California is considered a "low-risk" state and regulations have been implemented to maintain that status. CWD is a fatal disease that affects the neurological system of deer and elk. If you would like further information on CWD, see the Department's website; information on CWD can be found under "Game Management".

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/biggame.html

There are 81 different deer herds (map link) in the State of California. The deer herds are mostly divided by geographical boundaries such as mountain ranges, water bodies, habitat type, etc. Although CWD researchers are not completely clear on how the disease is transmitted, it is highly likely that it can be spread animal to animal and possibly from the ground where CWD-infected animals lived, sheltered, ate, defecated etc.

The Department is requiring that rehabilitators release rehabbed fawns back to the area/herd of origin to minimize the spread of the disease if CWD were to enter the State. If a facility desires to rehab fawns from two different deer herds, the fawns from each herd must be housed in completely separate enclosures. If a fawn comes from an unknown location, please contact the Department to discuss the situation so a decision can be made. If a fawn comes from out of state, the fawn must be returned to the state of origin or euthanized immediately. The Department is also requiring that the release locations of all fawns be recorded and submitted with the end-of-the-year report. The release location should be an address or some type of description that the Department will be able to clearly identify.

The Department understands that determining borders of some herds could be quite difficult. Please don't hesitate to call the Department for assistance in determining herd ranges and appropriate release sites. Please help the Department keep our state in the "low risk" status by following the above guidelines.

Sincerely,

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